

AMERSHAM IN THE TIME OF WILLIAM & MARY

An estate-ledger of so late a date as 1692-8 does not promise much that is new, but some facts from an authentic record of this kind seem worth preserving. The estate is Shardeloes, and the kindness of Captain Thomas Tyrwhitt-Drake, one of our Members, places the information contained in the book at our disposal. An enormous vellum-bound volume of nearly 600 leaves is marked on the cover THE LEIGER 1692; only about half the volume is filled and each page, not each opening, is numbered by hand. Besides the property in and adjoining Amersham, the estates in Kent and Cheshire then owned by the Drakes are included, but here we are concerned only with the estate in Bucks.

Sir William Drake, knt., who built the Market House, Amersham, in 1682,¹ died in 1690 leaving a son Montague who was born in 1673 and was therefore a minor when our ledger begins. His mother was daughter of Sir W. Montague, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and subsequently married Samuel Trotman; she therefore reigned over Shardeloes until her son came of age. He married Jane,² daughter of Sir J. Garrard, and they had a son, William Drake, the elder, who was destined to be one of the M.P.'s for Amersham for fifty years. Montague died when he was only 25 in 1698, and our ledger then finishes.

The book is most beautifully written, not a word ever being in doubt, the writing is probably that of Philip Ayres, who seems to have been a kind of secretary, though the disbursements were actually made by Joshua Leaper, the bailiff; his rough books, from which the ledger was written, are for the most part also preserved at Shardeloes.

¹ Lipscomb says that Sir Wm. Drake, bart., (uncle of the knight) built the Market House; this is an error, the baronet built the Almshouses in 1657.
² Not Mary as Lipscomb states.

All extracts given below preserve the original spelling; it was by no means constant, as will be noticed.

The names and holdings of the tenants afford quite a little directory; for convenience they are placed in alphabetical order.

<i>Tenant.</i>	<i> Holding.</i>	<i>Rent p.a.</i>		
		£	s.	d.
Anderson, Daniel	Farm adjoining to Eeles' Brewhouse	18		
„ „	Close ³ called the Hither Bentleys	3	10	
Babb, Edwd.	Stocking Farm in Coleshul Hamlett ⁴	50		
Bachelor, Widdow ⁵	The Queens Head Ale- house, by the Market House	3		
Ball, Jonathan	House & Garden by Common Platt	2		
Ball, Nathaniel	Farm called Whelp- leyes, in Colshil	27		
Beesley, Jeffrey	The Coffee House in Amersham, at the corner of the Church- yard ⁶	6		
Boreton, Edmond (a bootmaker)	House and shop by the Almshouses	3		
Boventon, Robert	Stampset Hills, 2 Little Rogers Fields, 2 Rotten Leyes, Pond Close, Swilly Field, Little Widmore Field, Rail Plat, and Dell Field	15	10	

³ From Ladyday, 1697.

⁴ "This is the Farm which was held by Mr. John Slowcomb."

⁵ In 1693 "Joseph Tench married the Widdow."

⁶ In 1694 it was let to John Hughes; he left in 1697 and "Mr. Humphrey Drake was admitted tenant."

<i>Tenant.</i>	<i> Holding.</i>	<i>Rent p.a.</i> £ s. d.
Bosworth, Wm.	Part of the house which was Abraham's (also called the House which had y ^e Welsh Harp)	3
Brown Wm.	A little close called Wheilding Platt ⁷	2 10 0
Charsley, John	House & backside adjoining to the Almshouses, & a close called Mil Platt	5
Charsley, Wm. (a carpenter)	Two houses in Whieilding by the Common Platt	5
Child, Widdow	Lands called High Fields & woods by Stockings Farm	30
Child, Timothy	Bury Farm in Amersham	172
Costard, John ⁸	That which was the Angell in Amersham, with the Orchard and a part of Berry Field	12
Darvell, John	Water mill & moor or mead in Little Misesenden	12
Daveney, John	High House Farm by Wickomb Heath (included Stony Field, Hatch Field, Church Path Close, Broxhalls, Knightlyes)	60
Dearn, Richd.	Cottage in Wheilding	4
Dearn, John	Tenement on Weedon Hill Green	1

⁷ " Lett before to Wm. Haly, Senr."

⁸ He succeeded Ed. Leared in 1696.

<i>Tenant.</i>	<i> Holding.</i>	<i>Rent p.a.</i> £ s. d.
Eames, B.	Chartridge Farm in Chesham parish ⁹	60
Fisher, John	Mead called Mil-Moore or Middle Moor, adjoining to Gossam Moor	5
„ „	[In 1696 he exchanged this for Pike-pond Moor]	4
Gardner, Widdow	Gosham Moor [lay partly in Litt. Missenden]	6
Goode, Richd. & Mrs. Haddon, now his wife	White Hart Inn at Slow [Slough]	12
Grove, John	House & garden near White Hart Inn, Slow	2 8
Hatch, Stephen	2 Tenements nigh the Almes Houses ¹⁰	3
Harly, Willm. (a wine-merchant)	Whielden Platt [At Mich'mas 1697 he was "put out" and succeeded by Will. Brown.]	2 10
Hopper, Willm. (a cooper)	One of the 3 new tenements in Wheilden, late Russel's	4
Hillum, Willm.	Tenement & backside at the Berry End	1 5
Honor, Widdow	Moor or meadow above Darvel's Mill in Litt. Missenden	2 10
Higgs, Willm.	Farm at Mop End, by Wickam Heath, partly in Little Missenden	35

⁹ The Drakes paid a quit-rent to the Earl (afterwards Duke) of Devonshire for this.

¹⁰ Formerly Widdow Baldwin's.

<i>Tenant.</i>	<i>Holding.</i>	<i>Rent p.a.</i>		
		£	s.	d.
Hobbs, Ralph	House near the Market House ¹¹	3		
Hobbs, John	One of the 3 New (1692) tenements in Whilding	2	10	
Hunt, John	Land in Amersham and Colshil (Church Field, The White Piece, ¹² The Gravelly Piece, ¹² The Bottom Piece, ¹² Two Bury Fields, The Winter's Close).	9	5	
Jewett, James	House & land on Weedon-hill Green	3		
Johnson, Willm.	Tenement in Whielding	1	14	
Leared, Edwd.	House formerly the Angel, ground adjoining to it, and a Mead of 6 Acres ¹³	29		
Loaton, Peter	House, orchard, & close by Wickomb Heath & near Mop End	5		
Lurkin, Widdow	Tenement on Weedon-hil Green	13	4	
Mackmillan, Willm. (a draper)	New House adjoining to Dr. Tanner's by the Market House	3	10	
Meacock, Nathanl. (a bricklayer)	One of the new Tenements in Wheelding	4		

¹¹ Left at Ladyday, 1697, when the house was let to Ed. Redrup.

¹² These three were in Coleshill.

¹³ In 1697 he seems to have exchanged this for "the White Hart land which John Perrot held, excepting Child's Mead, and Road's tenement." This is presumably the Ed. Learhead who was fined 3s. 4d. for refusing to take back Mary Gates, his apprentice, and was ordered to refund £3 10s. of the £4 paid to him by the parish of Amersham. *Quarter Sessions Records*, vol. II., pp. 18 and 23.

<i>Tenant.</i>	<i> Holding.</i>	<i>Rent p.a.</i>
		£ s. d.
Meacock, John	House in Whielding which was his brother Thomas's house, who left it Midsummer 1696	1 15
Nash, James (a sawyer)	Tenement near the Chequer in Whilding	2
Nash, Richard	Highhouse Farm (from Ladyday 1698)	44
Norwood, James (clothier)	Part of Dovehouse Mead, Bessel Field, & Neither Streets. After Ladyday 1694 were added Swashes & Rotten Leas	16 2 10
	After Michaelmas 1697 were added 2 closes of Bentlye's, & 2 closes called Whitleyes	11 10
Norwood, James ¹⁴	Bessel's Close the less, and Turney Mead (In 1698 this Norwood paid a fine of £18 for a house in Wilmots Fee, Amersham, and 2 closes the Upper & Lower Stamps, together with a herriot of £1).	5
Norwood, Jas. (the clothier) & Hobbs, Wm.	in partnership paid for the Market House In 1693 there were 69 pair of "tressles," but only 18 boards. In 1696 the tenancy was taken over by St. Hatch & Geo. Burrows.	6

¹⁴ There were two Jas. Norwoods, this one was a maltster, and as may be supposed confusion between them sometimes arose.

<i>Tenant.</i>	<i>Holding.</i>	<i>Rent p.a.</i> £ s. d.
Norris, Ann, widdow	Inn & land at Slow (Slough) [In 1693 she surrendered them, Rd. Goode took the White Hart, and the land went for a time to Wm. & John Webb. Quit-rents of 12s. were paid to "Eaton Colledg," and of 8s. to "Ben. Lane, Lord of the Mannor of Upton." ¹⁵].	50
Parker, Peter	The Lower Mill ¹⁶ & Nether Streets Close	30
Perrot, John (a maltster)	Farm of 38 acres in Amersham White Hart Inn, Amersham Child's Mead (Surrendered at Michaelmas 1696 and let to Ed. Leared. See note ¹³).	19 10 4
Perrot, Jas., Esq ¹⁶ .	Griffins Farm & a cottage at Brayes Green	4
Pearce, Thos. ¹⁷	Ramsacre (adjoyning to Weedon Hill Mead) Townsend Plat (by Will. Rutt's house)	4 3

¹⁵ See *Victoria County Histy*, Vol III., p 315.

¹⁶ In 1696 the mill was rebuilt and a barn was erected.

¹⁷ He evidently had a shop for he was given credit for nails, shot, pack-thread, cheese, tobacco at 2s. a pound, pipes, hops, soap, starch, salt, tar, and honey.

<i>Tenant.</i>	<i> Holding.</i>	<i>Rent p.a.</i> £ s. d.
Pitcher, Richd.	Stone Warren Farm in Hitchendon (Hughenden)	25
Raiment, Job ¹⁸	Dye house & orchard, Bury Field, & Sanders Mead (3 acres)	17
Ratey, Hy.	Garden close near the Town's End, near Colemorum	1 10
Rutt, Wm.	House & ground called Colemorum in Woodrow Liberty	8
Rudrupp, Edmond	House & garden by the Market House (which was Rd. Hobbes his house, now well repaired for him at a great charge).	3
Sells, John	The new Farm by the Fish Ponds, which had been Hayes (By 1697 this was called "Farm by the Pond, called The Canall," and the rent was reduced to £31-10-0, but this was never paid in full, as a "guift," or "allowance" of £17 p.a. was made to "Mrs. Selles").	34 10
Shrimpton, John (a farrier)	2 plowed closes in Litt. Missenden parish, next to Baldwin's Lane	1 10

<i>Tenant.</i>	<i>Holding.</i>	<i>Rent p.a.</i>		
		£	s.	d.
Smith, Thos.	Close by Slow, in Upton parish, called Arbor Hill	3	10	
Tanner, John (a doctor)	Bryery Close, part of Dove-house Mead & yard	13		
Tregoes, Widdow	Tenement in Wheelding (In 1695 she left it and it was taken by Thos. Meacock).	1	15	
Wingfield, Widdow	Bentleyes and Whittlyes Fields (In 1697 "this farm was let to Jas. Norwood, clothier, all but the Hither Bentleye's joyning to Hatch Lane).	12	10	
Wingfield, John ¹⁹	Farm called Denterhold Land	28		
" "	House called Hell, where he dwells by the Sarazen's Head	8	10	
" "	The Chequer Ale-House, let by him to Webb	4	10	
Yarrow, Widdow	Tenement next to Little Shardelois, in which Mr. Bent lives; and betwixt Mr. Bent's & Andrew Hall's (succeeded in 1694 by Edwd. Hatch).	1	10	0

There is a certain amount of overlapping in the dates of some of the tenancies, and an aggregate of the above rentals would be misleading, but it is fair to say that

¹⁹ John Wingfield was a butcher, and was credited with sums far exceeding his rents.

the rent-roll of all the Bucks property amounted to about £1,000 p.a. The net income from timber was not large; apparently trees sold standing were not included in this book. The sale of certain classes of small wood is shown below, but it did not amount to very much in total.

Labour. The general rate for male day-labour was 1s., and this embraced a variety of tasks such as: filling dung-cart, drawing water, plowing, mending hedges, loading straw, opening the draynes, filling the ruts in the woods, hay-making, pruning of trees, cutting of bushes, weeding the garden, and gravelling the walks. Women received 8d. a day for hay-making.

Higher daily rates were paid to bricklayers (1s. 8d.), reapers (2s.), and two sawyers received 3s. 4d.; generally speaking the more skilled operations were performed at piece-work rates; thus for threshing 10d. per quarter was paid for oats, 14d., 16d. and 20d. for barley, and even 2s. for wheat.

The following entries illustrate the price paid for work in the woods:—

Decr. 1691. By cash paid in full of a Bill of William Bachelor & his sons for felling wood, viz:		
For 8 Loads of Lances to pitch the New Stable at 6d. per load	4	0
For 5 dayes for himself & son sawing them	15	0
For felling 12 Loads of Lances more	6	0
For makeing 19 Stacks of Stack-wood & $\frac{3}{4}$ at 14d. each	1	3 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
For making 119 Loads of Billet at 6d. per load	2	19 6
For makeing 1700 Faggots at 14d. per Cent.	19	10
For cutting of 2550 Stakes at 4d. per Hundred	8	6
For cutting 950 Broom-staves at 3d. per cent.	2	4 $\frac{1}{2}$

Without knowing precisely what "lances" were²⁰ they sold well—at 4s. per load; billets sold at 5s. per load, faggots at 6s. per hundred, and broom-staves at 6d. per hundred. The fraction which we print as $\frac{3}{4}$ is always shown in the ledger with 4 as the numerator and 3 as the denominator.

In December 1693 the following additional rates for labour appear:

For cutting 1700 Hoop-poles	5	8
For cutting 3700 Hedg stakes	12	4
For cutting 8 Bundles of Ashen Rods	2	0
For cutting 6 Axle-trees		6
For making 216 Pole of Hedging	1	16 0
For making 605 Hedg Faggots		8 0

Whether or not "hoop-poles" meant hop-poles they thus cost 4d. per hundred to cut; they sold at 1s. 8d. per hundred.

Then in April 1692 we find:

For hewing 7 Loads & 37 Shides ²¹ of Timber in the Wood	3	9½
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and in Apr. 1694:

For peeling 5 Load, 16 Shide of Oake	2	8
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In July, 1692, James Nash sawed "2701 foot of Boards" for 2s. 4d. per hundred feet, but for "258 foot of Planks" he received 8s. 7d., which is at the rate of 3s. 4d. per hundred feet.

In June 1694 there was paid:

To the Charcoal man for burning the Cole	15	0
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and a year later:

To the Collier for burning a Hearth of Charcoals	10	0
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in July, 1697:

To the Old Collier for burning a Hearth of Charcole	11	3
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²⁰ The *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* makes them "branches of trees," which will scarcely do here; the *Dialect Dictionary* has not the word.

²¹ The *Dialect Dictionary* has for "shide"—"a long piece of wood split off from timber," and gives authority for equating it with half a foot of timber.

Other piece-work rates are:

July 1694:	For mowing 15 Acres in Weedon Hill Meade	1 17 6
July 1696:	By cash paid to Geo. Ley & Geo. Burrowes for fourteen Acres and a half of grass in Weedon hill mead	1 16 3
Sep. 1697:	To Elisha Hatch for Reaping 2 Acres & sixty pole of Wheat in Church path close	9 6

Commodities. The weekly marketing gives us the prices of various little luxuries:

Aug. 17th, 1692	By cash paid in full for Provisions bought at Market:	
	For a Quarter of Veal	5 0
	For a sweet breed	1 6
Sept. 15	For Calves Pallats	6
„ 16	For a dozen Chickens	6 0
Novr. 11	For six Neates' Tongues	6 0
„ 19	For 3 Turkeyes	5 7
Dec. 8th	For 25 lbs. of Butter	11 6
June 23rd 1694	For a Peck of Codlings	3
	For three lemons bought at Windsore	1 4
July 2	For 2 lbs. of Honey	2 2
Oct. 27th 1697	For 4 Turkeyes at Alisbury	8 6
Jan. 13th 1697	For 2 Dozen Larkes at Alesbury	2 6
„	For Expences there buying the Larkes	1 6
Mar. 5 1692	For a Hundred weight of Cheese	1 12 6

Other prices are represented by:

May 6th 1692	To Joseph Stanbridge for 10 Quarters of Oates	8 15 0
Decr. 18th 1694	By Cash paid for 12 Bushel of Wheat for the Bread given the Poor	2 6 0
Nov. 25th 1696	To Mr. Twitchell for 20 Quarter of oates at 19s. 6d.	19 10 0

Perhaps the most interesting prices are afforded by the more miscellaneous kinds of expenses such as:

May 8th 1693	For 6 Bushels of Coals viz. Charcoal	4 0
Aug. 24th ..	For 3 dozen of Stable Brooms, 3 dozen of Garden Brooms, & 7 doz. Housebrooms	1 0 9
Oct. 30th ..	For a pair of Pincers to cut the Hounds' Nails	2 6
Nov. 27th ..	For 3 Linkes to light the coach from y ^e Vache	10
Sept. 5th 1694	For 2 Spades for the Pond Garden	6 0
.. ..	For a couple of Sythes	5 0
.. ..	For two Mouse Trapes	1 0
.. ..	For a Lanthorn	1 10
.. 20th ..	For a Chaffe Sieve bought at Chesham Market	8
Novr. 5th 1696	For a Fann for the Corn	5 0
Aug. 2 1697	For 8 pair of Gloves for the Harvest Folk	5 4
Oct. 26 ..	For sweeping 21 Chimnyes	10 6
June 22nd 1698	To Goodman Rane paid for 4 Beehives	2 4

In 1696 a boy came to work from the Cheshire estates, and we can see the gradual assembly of his wardrobe:—

Nov. 4th, 1696	For a pair of Stockings for Ned the Cheshire boy	1 4
Jan. 22th ..	For a pair of Leather Breeches for Ned	2 6
Feb. 6th ..	For a pair of Hose & a dozen of Buttons for Nedd	1 4

July 27th 1697	For a Hatt for Ned the Cheshire Boy	3 6
Nov. 23th ,,	By Cash paid Edward Angle the Taylor, for making Ned the Cheshire Boye's Cloathes	14 6

Entries of interest are:—

Jan. 25th 1694	For a Rattle for Misse	1
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All quoted dates being O.S., this means 1695 and clearly refers to Mary Drake who was then six months old; she was destined to marry Sir Redmond Everard, bart., of Ireland.

Dec. 1 1697	By Cash paid Anthony Eeles for Drink or- dered at the Vestry, and more also at the Thanksgiving Day	15 0
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The last reference is to the celebration of the Treaty of Ryswick.

There is a strong suggestion of "bagmen" in the following entry:

June 12 1697	For a couple of Foxes	7 0
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In these days of high taxation it is of interest to read the following:—

Aug. 2nd 1698.	To the Collectors in full of the Capitation Tax for the Family, it having been omitted last year, but now demanded by the Receiver Gen ^l and pd. p. order	11 4 10
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" "	To the King's Tax pd. for Shardelois Land and Woods for the first & 2nd Pay- ments of the 3s. Tax for this year	13 15 00
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The assessment was thus apparently £183 6s. 8d.

The death of Montague Drake on 27 June 1698 caused the closure of this book for the purpose of winding up his estate; one of Mr. Leapor's last entries is:

Oct. 25 1698 To Stephen Hatch the
gardner, allowance
for his Dinner for
11 weekes, there be-
ing then no House
kept at Shardelois 1 13 0

The final account covers all the household servants' wages, accrued to Michaelmas 1698; most of them were not settled however until they were "paid in full by my lady" in the spring of 1700. The list seems to be sufficiently informative of the grades of servants and their annual rating to make it worth while to print it in full.

		<i>£ per ann.</i>
Madamoyselle Sadier	My Lady's woman ²²	12
Sarah Threstle	the Chamber maid	4
Eliz. Prudden	the Nursery maid	3-10 ^s
Eliz. Turner	the Landry maid	4
Eliz. Beavoir	the Kitchen maid	3-10 ^s
Mary Fuller	the Dairy maid	3-10 ^s
Philip Ayres		50
Joshua Leaper	the Bayliff	20
Thos. Tregoe	the Plowman	7-15 ^s
John Crawley	the Gardiner	10
Robt. Perrot	the Brewer	6
John Hobbes	the Carter	6
George Lambert	the Coachman	8
Wm. Saunders	the Postilion	4
John Evans	the Footman	5
John Treacher	the Huntsman	5
John Swan	the Footman	5
John Covel	the Cooke	16
Posthumus Paine	Mr. Drake's Gentleman	20

²² A disbursement in Nov., 1696, seems to refer to her:

"To Alesbury Coachman for Madamoyselle's Earnest ... 3 0

With this our extracts from this valuable record must cease; too voluminous to reproduce fully one can only extract from it such facts as may contribute to our history of the Borough and of the estate with which it has been so long associated, or to the economic conditions prevailing in Bucks at the close of the 17th century.